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Department of State

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1625

Action
EUR

DATE: 27, 1961

FROM: BERLIN

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 057, OCTOBER 27, 9 PM

DECLASSIFICATION DATE 11/5/77

PER Richards OFFICE EUR

TADRC FOR CASE NO. 23079

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ACTION DEPARTMENT 057, BONN PRIORITY 757, INFORMATION PARIS PRIORITY 604, LONDON 559, MOSCOW 535, POLAD USAREUR PRIORITY 467.

PARIS FOR EMBASSY, USRO, STOESSEL AND MCGUIRE.

FOLLOWING IS ACCOUNT DEVELOPMENTS AFTERNOON OCT 27.

AT 1630 PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLE WITH THREE CIVILIANS ATTEMPTED ENTER EAST BERLIN. ON BEING STOPPED WITH DEMAND FOR ID, PASSENGER INFORMED VOPO HE WOULD IDENTIFY HIMSELF TO SOV OFFICER. VOPO REPLIED "SOV OFFICER HAS NOTHING TO DO HERE." VEHICLE RETURNED TO CHECKPOINT AND THEN RE-ENTERED WITH ARMED ESCORT CONSISTING OF THREE JEEPS. AFTER CLEARING MAZE, TWO SOLDIERS DISMOUNTED FROM EACH JEEP AND ACCOMPANIED VEHICLE ON FOOT SOME 200 YARDS INTO EAST BERLIN. CONVOY ENTERED AND EXITED WITHOUT HINDRANCE. ONLY NEW WRINKLE WAS EAST GERMAN VEHICLE WITH ABOUT NINE VOPOS WHICH FOLLOWED CONVOY ON ITS BRIEF FORAY.

HELICOPTER AND GROUND OBSERVATION REPORTED NO MOVEMENT OF SOV VEHICLES DURING INCIDENT FROM THEIR POSITIONS AT BABEYPLATZ ABOUT THOUSAND YARDS FROM FRIEDRICHSTRASSE. HELICOPTER ORDERED NOT FLY OVER EAST BERLIN.

THERE WAS LARGE CROWD ON WEST BERLIN SIDE AND SMALLER GROUPS ON EAST BERLIN SIDE. AS US VEHICLES WERE MOVING THROUGH MAZE,

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-2- 857, OCTOBER 27, 9 PM FROM BERLIN

ONE EAST BERLINER USED VOPO DISTRACTION TO ESCAPE TO WEST BERLIN SHOUTING: "I AM FREE; I AM FREE."

AT ABOUT 1700 HOURS SEVEN SOV TANKS APPEARED; THEY LEFT AT 1720. ALERTED BY APPEARANCE SOV TANKS, US TANKS WHICH HAD LEFT AT ABOUT 1645 WERE ORDERED RETURN TO CHECKPOINT. SHORTLY AFTER THEIR RETURN AT 1800 HOURS TEN SOV TANKS APPEARED AND ARE NOW BLOCKING STREET.

VOPOS SUBSEQUENTLY TURNED BACK GERMAN-LICENSED VEHICLE WITH STATEMENT THAT BORDER TEMPORARILY CLOSED. US MILITARY VEHICLE WAS DISPATCHED IMMEDIATELY AND PASSED THROUGH VOPO LINES. SINCE THEN FRENCH PRIVATELY-OWNED VEHICLE AND DANISH VEHICLE ALSO PASSED. ON BASIS OF FOREGOING WEST BERLIN POLICE DEDUCING THAT VOPOS ADMITTING ALLIED VEHICLES AND VEHICLES OF PERSONS LIVING IN EAST BERLIN.

IN COURSE OF AFTERNOON SEVERAL SOV VEHICLES CAME THROUGH TO WEST, INCLUDING SOV DEPUTY COMMANDANT AT 1625. COL LAZAREV WAS OBSERVED DRIVING IN VICINITY US HQRS. SOV WAR MEMORIAL VEHICLE RETURNED TO EAST BERLIN VIA SANDKRUG BRIDGE.

AS NIGHT FELL OVER FRIEDRICHSTRASSE, WHERE EAST GERMANS HAVE NOW RAISED LARGE NUMBER OF GDR AND RED FLAGS, SEARCHLIGHTS WENT INTO OPERATION ON BOTH SIDES; EAST GERMANS OUTNUMBERING SOLE US BEACON WITH THREE SETS OF TWO SEARCH LIGHTS EACH.

SITUATION SOMEWHAT TENSE BUT NOT CONSIDERED DANGEROUS.

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